

Message Text

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PAGE 01 KUALA 04948 291009Z

ACTION EA-09

INFO OCT-01 ISO-00 CIAE-00 DODE-00 PM-05 H-01 INR-07

L-03 NSAE-00 NSC-05 PA-01 PRS-01 SP-02 SS-15

USIA-06 AID-05 IGA-02 EB-08 /071 W

-----000327 291156Z /43

R 290324Z JUL 77

FM AMEMBASSY KUALA LUMPUR

TO SECSTATE WASHDC 8272

INFO AMEMEVEVV BANGKOK

AMEMBASSY JAKARTA

AMEMBASSY MANILA

AMEMBASSY SINGAPORE

CINCPAC HONOLULU

C O N F I D E N T I A L KUALA LUMPUR 4948

CINCPAC FOR POLAD

E.O. 11652: GDS

TAGS: PBOR, MY, RP

SUBJECT: PROSPECTS FOR A SABAH CLAIM SETTLEMENT

REF: (A) KUALA LUMPUR 4497; (B) KUALA LUMPUR 4383; (C) MANILA 11483

(NOTAL); (D) MANILA 11316; (E) MANILA 10985

1. MIDDLE-LEVEL MFA OFFICIAL KNOWLEDGEABLE ON MALAYSIAN-PHILIPPINE AFFAIRS AND SOUTHERN PHILIPPINE MUSLIM PROBLEM (E.G., HE HAS MET WITH MNLF LEADER NUR MISUARI BOTH IN K.L. AND TRIPOLI) INDICATED TO EMBOFF S

AT RECENT LUNCHEON THAT GOM IS HOPEFUL MARCOS' VISIT HERE TO ATTEND ASEAN SUMMIT WILL LEAD TO BREAKTHROUGH ON LONG-STANDING DISPUTE RE PHILIPPINES CLAIM TO SABAH. ACCORDING TO OUR CONTACT, GOP HAS BEEN PRESSING FOR PRIME MINISTER DATUK HUSSEIN ONN TO PAY AN OFFICIAL VISIT

TO MANILA, PROMISING THAT IF HE DID SO "SOMETHING BIG" WOULD HAPPEN. (HUSSEIN HAS VISITED ALL ASEAN CAPITALS EXCEPT MANILA.) HOWEVER, SINCE

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PAGE 02 KUALA 04948 291009Z

MALAYSIANS HAVE HAD THEIR HOPES OF PHILIPPINE RENUNCIATION OF SABAH CLAIM FALSELY RAISED ON EARLIER OCCASIONS, PARTICULARLY FOLLOWING THE FEBRUARY 1976 BALI ASEAN SUMMIT WHEN IT WAS WIDELY RUMORED MARCOS WOULD ACT TO REMOVE THIS IRRITANT, THEY ARE ADOPTING A "WAIT AND SEE" ATTITUDE AND WILL BE ATTENTIVE TO WHAT MARCOS HAS TO SAY ON THIS WHEN IN K.L., HE INDICATED.

2. THE JULY 28 EDITION OF THE BUSINESS TIMES, SISTER PUBLICATION TO THE
HE
GOM-INFLUENCED NEW STRAITS TIMES, CARRIED AN UNSOURCED STORY OUT OF
MANILA STATING THAT THE PHILIPPINE NATIONAL SECURITY COUNCIL WOULD
DEBATE THE SABAH CLAIMS AT A TELEVISED HEARING BEFORE PRESIDENT MARCO
S
LEAVES FOR KUALA LUMPUR. ACCORDING TO A PHILIPPINE EMBOFF, THE
STORY IS ACCURATE AND THE GOP NOW DEFINITELY WANTS TO RESOLVE THE
SABAH PROBLEM.

3. COMMENT: THIS WILL BE AN INTERESTING TOPIC TO KEEP AN EYE
ON DURING THE SUMMIT AND RELATED MEETINGS. ALTHOUGH THE ATMOSPHERICS
SEEM TO BE UPBEAT (PARA 2 AND REFTELS), WE TOO PREFER TO WAIT AND
SEE WHAT ACTUALLY MATERIALIZES. IF SUCH A RESOLUTION WERE ANNOUNCED
IN THE ASEAN CONTEXT, IT WOULD BE A MAJOR PLUS FOR THE ORGANIZA-
TION'S IMAGE. ON THE OTHER HAND, SABAH CHIEF MINISTER DATUK HARRIS
SALLEH AND PRESIDENT MARCOS MIGHT PREFER AN ANNOUNCEMENT TO BE MADE
ON THCVLA SABAH OR MANILA RESPECTIVELY FOR THEIR OWN DOMESTIC
POLITICAL REASONS.
MILLER

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